

3.12 Recreation

This section addresses potential impacts of the proposed project on recreational activities at the Lake Perris SRA. This analysis reviews recreation impacts resulting from the drawdown of Lake Perris based on visitation information gathered from DPR.

3.12.1 Setting

In 1974, after the completion of Perris Dam, DWR and DPR entered into an agreement to transfer possession and control of certain real property at Lake Perris from DWR to DPR. The agreement allowed DPR to develop recreational opportunities pursuant to Chapter 10, Part 3, Division 6 of the California Water Code, commonly referred to as the Davis-Dolwig Act. The agreement also states that the use of the property by DPR is subordinate to the use by DWR for the construction, operation and maintenance of the State Water Resources Development System (TPC, 1974).

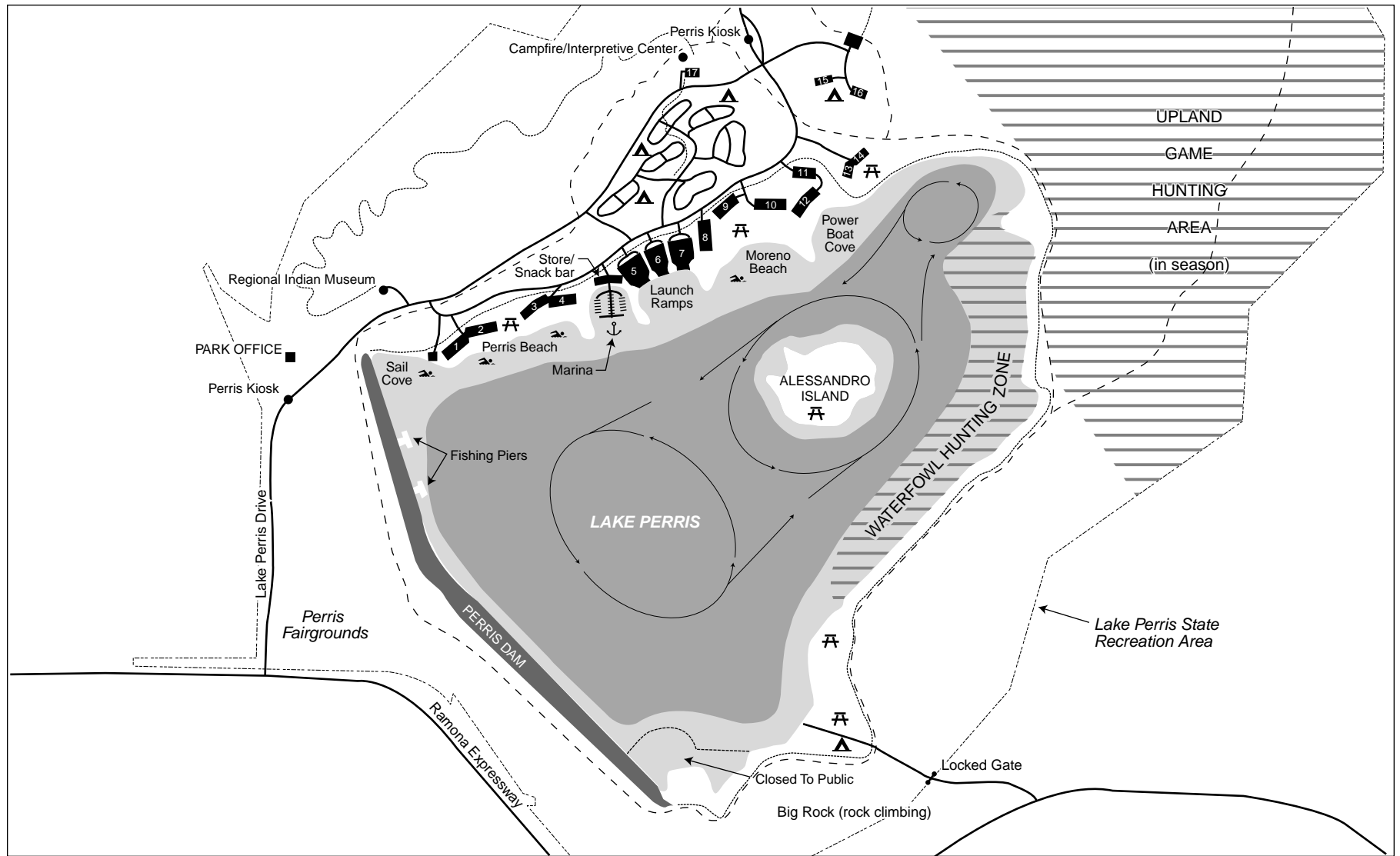
DPR has developed the land around Lake Perris into a large and widely popular State Park. The average attendance prior to 2005 was 1.1 million visitors per year (DPR, 2005). Water-oriented recreation activities at Lake Perris SRA include fishing, boating, swimming, water skiing, wind surfing, scuba diving, and jet skiing. Onshore-oriented recreation in the park includes: picnic sites with shade structures, hiking, camping, rock climbing, bicycling, and sunbathing. The Ya'i Heki' Regional Indian Museum is located within the park and is open on weekends and Wednesdays. These primary activities are supported by basic facilities such as entry control, parking, restrooms, and orientation information (display panels/water stations). **Figure 3.12-1** shows the recreation facilities available today at Lake Perris SRA. **Figures 3.12-2** through **3.12-4** provide pictures of some of the recreational improvements at the Lake Perris SRA.

Recreational Activities

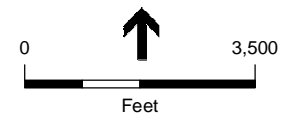
Camping

Campgrounds at Lake Perris SRA are located on the north and south sides of the reservoir. The south side contains family campsites within the Bernasconi camping area. On the north side there are family campsites as well as separate areas for group camping and horse camps. Within the family camping area, there are 167 sites for tent camping and 264 paved sites for recreational vehicles. Tent camping sites are 31 feet long and do not have electrical hookups. The paved sites are also 31 feet long and have electrical hookups. All camp sites have a table, fire ring with a grill, and access to water. Restrooms with hot showers can be found at various locations within the campgrounds.

The separate horse camping area is equipped with corrals, water troughs, picnic tables, campfire rings, drinking water, and chemical toilets. There are seven units that can each accommodate up to eight people and three vehicles with horse trailers.



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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| ----- Lake Perris State Rec Area | 5 MPH Bouy Line | ⚓ Marina |
| Hiking Trails | # Parking Lot Numbers | 🏊 Swimming Area |
| - . - . Horse Trails | ▨ Hunting Areas | ▲ Camping Area |
| - · - · Bike Trails | → Boat Traffic direction | ⛶ Picnic Area |



SOURCE: California Department of Recreation.

DWR - Perris Dam Remediation Program . 206008.02

Figure 3.12-1
Pre-Drawdown
Recreational Facilities



1. Bernasconi group camping area



2. Bernasconi picnic area



3. Park area near Bernasconi



4. Big Rock (rock climbing)



5. Paved bike trail



6. Horse trail near petroglyph rock



7. Launch ramps



8. Fishing boat



9. View of marina looking south



10. Launch ramp near lifeguard station



11. View of picnic benches on the western shore of the lake



12. View of Moreno Beach looking east

Boating

Facilities

The existing marina is located on the north shore to the right of parking lot four. The marina is concession-operated consisting of 200 wet slips and 70 dry storage spaces for monthly rental. There are also 35 slips available for overnight rental. A gas dock for fuel sales has recently closed. As a result, the current concessionaire trucks in fuel for its fuel sales. The marina concessionaire rents fishing boat and pontoon boats as well as other water recreation equipment including water skis, kneeboards, wake boards, and ski vests. The marina store carries bait and tackle, boating accessories, camping supplies, and snacks serving both marina users and other park visitors. Until recently the marina also operated a snack bar but it has recently closed. There are also two paved boat ramps with parking for boat trailers located on the north side of the reservoir from lots five through seven which provide six lanes of boat launch access.

Permitted Reservoir Use

Lake Perris SRA allows Two Stroke engines and the maximum boat speed on the reservoir is 35 mph. Personal watercraft use is permitted at Lake Perris. Fishing and pontoon boat rentals are available from the Lake Perris Marina. Sailboats and windsurfers can park and launch in the sail cove area west of lot one. Alessandro Island is a day use boat-in area only with picnic tables and grills.

Marina Concession Operations

Construction of the marina was completed in 1976. In June 1976, the large national recreation facility operator Volume Services Inc. (subsequently know as Volume Services America and more recently as Centerplate) signed a 25 year concession contract agreement with DPR. At the end of the 25 year contract period (in 2001), Volume Services America continued to operate the marina under a month to month agreement with DPR until February 2004, when it transferred the contract to Pyramid Enterprises (aka Rocky Mountain Recreation) who are the current marina operator (concessionaire) at Lake Perris. DPR will issue a solicitation for a new long-term operating agreement for the Lake Perris marina operations, once the dam is repaired and Lake Perris returns to its normal operating level. Due to the marina facilities' age and current physical conditions, DPR expects that significant new construction/renovation would be necessary to provide future marina services at the Lake (Singleton, 2007).

Under the terms of the current concession contract, the operator minimum "rental fee" to the State of California is \$7,200 per year. However, generally the concessionaire's actual rental fee to DPR is determined by its annual revenues. The contract sets a rental rate of six percent of its annual gross sales (with a reduction to two percent for its fuel sales). During its first full year of operating the Lake Perris marina (i.e. June 2004 to June 2005 contract year), Pyramid Enterprises made nearly \$559,000 in gross sales and paid DPR a \$26,785 rental fee. However, the concessionaire's gross sales dropped to approximately \$465,000 the following year – a more than \$93,000 decrease equivalent to nearly a 17 percent sales decline from the previous year (DPR, 2006). Although specific information on the marina's gross sales for the June 2006 to June 2007 fiscal year could not be obtained, according to the concessionaire, sales levels for the marina

operations were more than half its pre-drawdown levels (prior to August 2005) (Carter, 2007). The primary source of lost marina revenues is the reduced slip occupancy at the marina. In addition, the concession has experienced reduced retail sales and equipment rental revenues.

Swimming

Lake Perris SRA has two designated swim areas, Moreno and Perris Beach. Scuba diving is only allowed at Perris Beach. During the summer months and on weekends when beach visitorship is high, lifeguards are on duty daily.

Fishing

Shoreline fishing and float tube fishing are allowed, but not along designated swim beaches, nor where “no fishing” signs are posted. Fishing is also allowed off the Lake Perris Marina dock for an additional fee. All anglers 16 years and older must purchase a fishing license from the CDFG. Fishing is allowed during regular park hours only.

No creel survey data was available from Lake Perris SRA or CDFG more recent than 1984. Available general information indicate that fish found at Lake Perris include largemouth bass, spotted bass, bluegill, red ear sunfish, black crappie, carp, channel catfish and bull catfish. The reservoir is regularly stocked during the winter months with rainbow trout; catfish are also stocked. The best areas to look for catfish are along the southwest corner of the dam or at the east end of the reservoir. Trout can be found near the marina or along marshy areas. Bass tournaments are held regularly during winter months.

Fishing limits include: five bass (legal size, over 12 inches), five trout, ten catfish. Bluegill, sunfish, crappie and carp have no established limits.

Picnicking

The day use areas of Lake Perris SRA offer 300 picnic sites with tables and grilling features. The most popular areas are located next to Moreno Beach and Perris Beach. Both beaches have large grassy areas adjacent to the sand for playing games, sunbathing, and picnicking. There are three group picnic areas on the north side of the reservoir that are equipped with tables, grills, running water, and large sinks. Each of these units would accommodate up to 200 people. The Bernasconi Beach group picnic area is located on the southern side of the reservoir and can accommodate 25-100 people. This area has tables, grills, water and chemical toilets. Figure 3.12-2 shows pictures of picnicking areas.

Hiking/Biking/Horseback Riding

There is a nine-mile hiking and bicycling trail around the reservoir perimeter. Two other main hiking trails lead to the scenic overlook at Terri Peak and a spot near the camping area that offers a view of Moreno Pass. The Lake Perris Stables offer daytime horse rentals. Horse can be ridden on the horse trail that circles the reservoir and on various smaller trails in the recreation area.

Rock Climbing

Big Rock is a climbing spot located within Lake Perris SRA near the outlet tower. The climbing spot is approximately 180 feet high. It hosts 34 recognized routes that are popular among beginning and intermediate climbers, but also provides some aggressive opportunities for more advanced climbers. The climbing area is open year round and is approximately half a mile from the Bernasconi Road parking area. Chemical toilets and picnic tables are provided near the climbing area. Figure 3.12-2 shows the rock climbing area.

Hunting

Hunting is allowed in the designated hunting area located on the northeast portion of the recreation area. The following upland game may be hunted during their allowable seasons: brush and cottontail rabbits, black tailed jackrabbits, valley quail, morning dove, ducks, and geese. The most common species hunted are the mallard, gadwall, and green winged teal. The hunter's lot kiosk is located on the Group Camp road.

Figure 3.12-1 identifies the hunting areas. The duck hunting area is located within the shallow northern shore of the reservoir. From 2007 to the present waterfowl hunting seasons have been canceled due to waterfowl habitat disruption from the reservoir drawdown.

Ya'i Heki' Regional Indian Museum

The Ya'i Heki' Regional Indian Museum is located at 17801 Lake Perris Drive, near the northern end of the dam. The museum provides a comprehensive interpretation of Native American history, including the cultures of various native tribes and indigenous peoples throughout the southern California desert region.

Perris Fairgrounds

The Perris Fairgrounds consists of approximately 105 acres offering a variety of recreational opportunities, including: a speedway track, skate park, equestrian arena, BMX track, motocross track, go-kart track, and rodeo arena. The Perris Fairgrounds is also home to the Southern California Fair.

3.12.2 Regulatory Framework

The following agencies have regulatory authority over recreation areas in or near the proposed project site.

California State Parks

Lake Perris State Recreation Area is part of the system of California State Parks. Established in the early 1970s, the area surrounds Lake Perris, the southernmost reservoir in the SWP. It is managed by California's DPR, which was created within the California Resources Agency and is charged to "provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued

natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation” (California State Parks, 2007). The California Code of Regulations and the Public Resources code charge California State Parks with accomplishing its mission through a legal mandate to “administer, protect, provide for recreational opportunity, and develop the State Park System; to interpret the values of the State Park System to the public; to operate the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program; to administer the California Historical Resources Protection Program; and to administer federal and state grants and bond funds to local agencies” (California State Parks, 2004). DPR manages more than 270 park units that include terrestrial and marine reserves, state beaches, wilderness areas, historic structures, and off-highway vehicle parks and that cover 1.4 million acres, 280 miles of coast, 625 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites and 3,000 miles of multi-use trails.

46th District Agricultural Association

The Lake Perris Fairgrounds is operated and managed by the 46th DAA, a state agency that receives fiscal and policy oversight from both the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Division of Fairs and Expositions. The 46th DAA is a sub-agency of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and is responsible for the management of the Southern California Fair.

3.12.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

This section addresses potential impacts of the proposed project to recreational facilities in the project area. The impact significance criteria are based on guidance provided by Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* regarding significant environmental effects. For this Draft EIR, the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would:

- Conflict with established recreational uses;
- Cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of an existing neighborhood, regional park, or other recreational facility;
- Result in the need for construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could adversely affect the environment.

Expansion of Recreational Facilities

The project would not result in additional population that would require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

Deterioration of Recreational Facilities

Impact 3.12-1: Drawdown of Lake Perris could cause or accelerate physical deterioration of the recreational facilities at the Lake Perris SRA.

Attendance at Lake Perris declined 47 percent between 2004 and 2008 apparently at least in part as a result of the drawdown of the reservoir level. **Table 3.12-1** summarizes attendance numbers for seven years since 2002 provided by the Lake Perris SRA. Both paid boat launches and camping sites have declined since the drawdown. Although non-water-related facilities have not been affected by the drawdown, use of paid camping sites has declined approximately 41 percent since 2004. The reduction in visitors appears to be directly related to the drawdown compounded by the perception in the community that the facility is closed or is less attractive. The reduction in attendance at the Lake Perris SRA is not considered an environmental impact by itself. Loss of revenue to the Lake Perris SRA and its concessionaire is not an environmental impact except inasmuch as the economic effect results in a physical change to the environment. The following sections evaluate impacts resulting from the drawdown and loss of visitors to swimming, boating, camping and terrestrial activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding and rock climbing. The analysis assesses physical changes to the environment caused by the reduction in visitors.

**TABLE 3.12-1
SEVEN-YEAR ATTENDANCE RECORDS AT LAKE PERRIS STATE RECREATION AREA**

Year	Paid Day Use	Paid Overnight Camping	Paid Boat Launches	Total Attendance
2002	791,506	252,477	74,532	1,296,118
2003	896,704	223,793	66,792	1,206,149
2004	825,177	219,120	71,923	1,175,599
2005	780,226	176,016	65,970	1,020,739
2006	474,403	117,102	32,253	649,122
2007	470,465	124,833	30,136	677,534
2008	424,519	129,731	23,423	623,393
Percent change from 2004-2008	-51.8%	-40.8%	-67.4%	-47.0%

SOURCE: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Lake Perris State Recreation Area, 2009.

Swimming Facilities

Swimming facilities in place at Lake Perris include Moreno and Perris Beach. The distance between the lawn area and the waters edge was significantly increased at both of these beaches by the drawdown. The exposed lakebed substrate within this distance was not suitable or sufficient for beach related activities. In 2006, DWR imported 14,171 tons of sand to the Perris Beach area to enhance the beach and maintain access to the water for swimming activities. The sand was spread between elevations 1558 and 1564 covering a 3,000 feet long by 80 feet wide area. Lifeguard stations were also relocated closer to the new shoreline. As a result of the new beach sand, the area dedicated to swimming and beach activities was actually increased by 5.5 acres. The impacts of the drawdown on swimming facilities have been effectively lessened by DWR's actions. No significant deterioration of facilities would occur.

Camping and Other Terrestrial Activity Facilities

Lake Perris contains 426 camping sites, numerous picnicking areas, a rock climbing area and several hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails throughout the SRA. Although general attendance and camping has decreased since 2004, the facilities have remained open. Campgrounds, hiking trails, and rock climbing areas remain open to the public. The drawdown has not substantially limited these opportunities. Similar to the discussion provided regarding boating, the general perception that the park is either closed or less attractive may be depressing visitorship. Implementation of mitigation measures to increase public outreach would assist in restoring visitorship.

Initially, closing the entire Perris SRA during the construction of the dam and tower remediation projects was considered, primarily to ensure that the public's safety would not be jeopardized by construction activities. However, since the construction work area will be essentially limited to the southeastern side of the reservoir, it was decided to keep the main portions, the more heavily recreated areas, of the park open and to only restrict public access to the southeastern side of the reservoir. This will remove from service three group camping sites in the Bernsconi Campground. The remaining camping sites north and west of the reservoir will be available for public use for the duration of construction. Once construction is completed, the group campgrounds will be re-opened.

The temporary closure of the Bernasconi group camping and group picnicking areas could result in deterioration of these facilities from neglect. Construction activities could modify, damage or degrade the facilities within the construction zone. Following construction, DWR would assist DPR in returning the Bernasconi campsites to their pre-construction condition. The project would not result in significant deterioration of the group camp sites.

Boating Facilities

The drawdown reduced the size of the reservoir, shortening the reservoir's water edge perimeter. The distance from the existing facilities to the new water's edge increased. The reservoir's surface area was reduced by about 40 percent. At maximum water surface, up to 450 watercrafts are allowed on the reservoir at any one time. With the drawdown, the maximum number of watercraft has been reduced to 250 (refer to Impact 3.12-2 for a discussion of impacts to boating activities). Following the initial drawdown, the marina was stranded on the shore and the ends of the boat ramps were exposed, effectively eliminating all boating activity. DWR along with the Department of Boating and Waterways assisted the Lake Perris SRA in 2005 by funding modifications to the marina that included extending the marina roughly 60 feet further out into the reservoir. During this process, several slips were damaged reducing the marina's capacity. DWR also funded the extension of two of the three boat ramps so that they were functional at the lower water level. With these modifications, the reservoir was reopened for boating recreation, albeit to a significantly lesser degree since launch ramps 7, 14 and the Power Cove Launch ramp were permanently closed. Figure 2-4 identifies improvements funded by DWR to ameliorate effects of the drawdown on recreational facilities at the Lake Perris SRA. Despite DWR's actions to reestablish boating opportunities, the number of boat launches decreased by 51 and 53 percent

during the summer and winter, respectively, based upon attendance data from 2001 to 2006 (Monterey Plus DEIR, 2007d).

The marina concession operator has reported major decreases in its occupancy levels and sales revenues in its financial reports to DPR. According to the concession operator several factors are responsible for the marina operations lost slip rents and other revenue decreases as follows:

- Extensive negative press attention on the Lake's current conditions has contributed heavily in reduced public use of the marina facilities. The concession operator has reported that they continue to receive inquiries from the public as to whether their boating use of the reservoir was possible. Public outreach and other promotion efforts could possibly reduce the effect (Carter, 2007).
- Many former boaters are unfamiliar with the visual attributes of the exposed and unvegetated shoreline that may be discouraging park attendance. Although this condition occurs at most water storage reservoirs that respond to precipitation and demand, Lake Perris is maintained at a relatively consistent elevation (Carter, 2007).
- The marina facility was constructed in the 1970s and has not received major upgrades since then. The facility may be nearing its useful life. The reduction in the number of slips caused by its relocation to deeper waters and the perception of general disrepair may be contributing to the reduced usership. In addition, causeway access to the slips has a very steep angle for customers. According to the concessionaire, the severity of the incline makes the use of the slips difficult for many customers and may be a contributing factor to the reduction in usership (Carter, 2007).
- During the course of the slips relocation, the marina has had difficulty with its provision of water and electrical power to the slips. Some slips are currently without water and electrical utility services. This reduced marina service may reduce Lake Perris's competitiveness with other marinas in the region (Carter, 2007).
- The lowering of the reservoir coupled with on-going degradation of the existing marina physical condition has reduced both perceived and actual ability of the slips' to provide safe mooring facilities, particularly during storm conditions. As a result, some customers are reluctant to use the wet slip facilities especially during the non-summer season when potential storm events are more likely. The resulting reduced occupancy contributes to the increased non-summer slip rental revenue losses. It also discourages the extent of occasional and "casual" reservoir usage during those periods when reservoir use is already limited (e.g. mid-week and non summer seasons) (Carter, 2007).
- Since the boat ramp use fees are not collected by the concessionaire, the reduced launch ramp access has a more indirect effect on the concession operations. However, the marina's 35 overnight slips do rely on visitors putting in using the boat ramp (Carter, 2007).

Future efforts to bid out a new concession agreement by DPR would likely be hampered by a weakened customer base and reduced market potential. Potential future operators and financial partners (e.g. loan institutions) would be less interested in the future marina development opportunity at Lake Perris based on a greater risk and uncertainty associated with low occupancy rates and revenues at the current marina operations. If the concessionaire defaults or new contracts are not viable, the physical condition of the facilities would deteriorate further.

Given the facilities' age and condition, major redevelopment of the Lake Perris marina is overdue and is necessary to maintain the Lake's boating recreational use. The pre-drawdown condition of

the marina was poor, requiring major upgrades irrespective of the drawdown and proposed project. The proposed project has not substantially affected the marina's condition. DWR already extended the access ramp and moved the marina facilities back into the water to ensure that wet slips were still available after the drawdown. DWR also replaced some crossbeams in the marina structural frame to assist in rehabilitation of the facilities and to ensure public safety. The facilities remain functional, although visitorship has declined. The sooner that sufficient funding is secured and the new concession solicitation and selection process successfully completed the less potential for the facilities to be neglected by the concession operators.

The longer term and underlying demand for boating recreation at Lake Perris is strong given the rapid local population growth and lack of comparable recreation sites nearby. It is expected that with the return of the original reservoir level and a refurbished marina and ancillary facilities, future boating use will rebound to pre-drawdown numbers.

The reduction in boat recreation at Lake Perris has an economic effect on the concessionaire and on the park's ability to maintain the concessionaire's contract. CEQA (§15064(e)) is concerned with economic impacts only with respect to physical changes to the environment they bring about. If the drawdown or reduced visitorship resulting from the drawdown, caused the marina and boating facilities to dilapidate beyond the normal weathering due to age, then appropriate mitigation would be to repair or replace the facilities with equal value. However, the marina facilities at Lake Perris SRA in 2004 were already reaching the end of their useful life. The drawdown has not directly contributed to physical deterioration of the marina or other concessionaire facilities. In 2006, DWR performed significant maintenance to the marina. The facilities remain functional, although visitorship has declined. Mitigation Measure 3.12-1a would assist with restoring visitorship. Once the reservoir level is restored, the marina would return to its original location and permitted boat launches would return to pre-drawdown numbers. Mitigation Measure 3.12-1b would ensure that DWR repaired physical damage to the marina caused by the drawdown. Physical impacts to the boating facilities caused by the drawdown would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.12-1a: DWR shall assist Lake Perris SRA in conducting promotional and public outreach efforts to improve public awareness that the park is open during the drawdown period. The public outreach effort shall include making brochures available and posting of informational signs throughout the park describing the work being conducted and to advertise the facilities and activities currently available in order to promote recreational use at Lake Perris.

Mitigation Measure 3.12-1b: At the conclusion of the project, DWR shall work cooperatively with DPR to assess physical deterioration to the marina, if any, directly related to the project. DWR shall develop an action plan with DPR and mitigate for those impacts.

Significance after Mitigation: Less than significant.

Disruption of Recreational Activities

Impact 3.12-2: Construction activities would result in temporary disruption of recreational activities at Lake Perris SRA.

Consideration was originally given to the possibility of closing the entire Lake Perris SRA during the construction period to ensure the public would not interfere with borrow hauling activities. However, since all construction activities were planned for only the southern shore of the reservoir and beneath the dam, only the recreation areas in close proximity to the construction activities would be restricted from public access. The construction zone would be fenced including the lakeshore to prevent boaters from interfering with the excavation and hauling activities. An exclusion buoy would be placed approximately 200 feet from the south shoreline to keep boaters a safe distance from construction during the entire two-year construction period. Lake Elsinore and Diamond Valley Lake are located approximately 20-22 miles away and offer alternative recreational opportunities similar to Lake Perris. Lake Elsinore has multiple boat launches, campgrounds, day use and beach areas, watercraft rentals, and motocross tracks. Diamond Valley Lake offers fishing (coldwater and warm water fish), fishing tournaments and boating.

Noise from construction equipment, haul trucks, and blasting would affect the recreational experience for the duration of the two-year construction period. Impacts from noise are described in Section 3.9. See Table 3.9-8 which summarizes noise impacts and mitigation. The visual impact of construction equipment and trucks and the general increased activity on the south shore of the reservoir would disrupt the otherwise quiet and relaxing recreational experience. See Table 3.1-1 summarizing visual impacts and mitigation. The construction would disrupt the peaceful character of the natural setting and would be unavoidable for the duration of the construction period. It is fully anticipated that this would likely result in further reduced attendance.

Camping

Camping north of the reservoir would not be significantly impacted by construction activities. Closures relating to material transportation during the dam remediation and outlet tower construction would affect the Bernasconi campground's, three group campsites out of a total of 426 camp sites for the entire park. The group camp sites accommodate between 25 and 80 campers each. Although the remaining campgrounds north and west of the reservoir would remain open, the camping experience could be adversely affected during the day by noise and visual impacts from the on-going construction activities. Therefore, the temporary effect of construction on the camping experience at the SRA would be significant and unavoidable.

Boating

The drawdown has resulted in revised boating rules that prohibit access to some areas and require slower speeds. The boating activities allowed by the new rules would be mostly unaffected by construction-related closures since transportation access to the marina and remaining functional boat ramp would remain in service. Visitors would have full access to the boat launch and marina facilities during the construction period.

Boat speed limits have been reduced from 35 mph to five mph around Allesandro Island and a new navigation pattern has been established. Lake Perris SRA has posted signs at the reservoir shore, at the marina, and on their website describing the rule changes. Posting of signs would continue throughout the duration of the lower reservoir level, in order to keep all visitors informed.

Boating activities on the water would remain open to the public under modified rules, enforced by DPR. However, the boating experience would be affected by noise and visual impacts from construction activities. Most of these impacts would occur during the weekday periods when visitorship is lowest. However, the disruption could substantially reduce the quality of the recreation experience. This would conflict with the recreational use and result in a significant and unavoidable temporary impact.

Swimming

The swimming areas at the north end of the reservoir would not significantly be affected by construction activities. DWR has provided sand to restore access to the reservoir for swimmers. Although swimming activities would be affected by noise and visual disruptions from across the reservoir, the distance is great enough that swimming activities would largely remain unaffected by the construction.

Picnicking

Picnicking opportunities north of the reservoir would not be significantly impacted by construction activities. However, the Bernasconi day-use area, which can accommodate between 25-100 people, would be closed entirely to the public for the two-year construction period. There would still be three group picnic areas that accommodate 200 people each and 300 additional picnic sites at Perris and Moreno Beaches that would remain open. Approximately 15 percent of the picnic areas would be closed during the two year construction time period. It is anticipated that the balance of the picnicking areas would accommodate the demand throughout this time period.

Hiking/Bicycling/Horseback Riding

Hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding trails would remain open during construction, except near the Bernasconi Campgrounds, near the quarry, and near the existing outlet tower. The remaining paths would remain open. However, construction activities within the construction zones would generate noise and visual impacts that would affect the hiking and horseback riding experience at Lake Perris SRA. The normally peaceful natural environment would be adjacent to large earthmoving equipment working all day for two years. The disruption could substantially reduce the quality of the recreation experience. The noise may also bother the horses which could prevent some visitors from being able to ride in the area. This would conflict with the recreational use of the facility and result in a significant and unavoidable temporary impact. It is expected that the use of these facilities would return to pre-drawdown levels once the construction is complete. In addition, once construction is complete, the construction haul road over the Bernasconi Hills could be used for recreation, complimenting the trail system around the Lake Perris SRA

Hunting

The reservoir drawdown impacted waterfowl habitat and as a result, hunting seasons have been canceled since 2007. Hunting would be unavailable for the duration of construction given the intensive construction activities, the loss of the hunting grounds, and the proximity of construction workers. Duck and small game hunters may access other hunting areas during the drawdown period. However, the borrow area may permanently remove water fowl hunting opportunities at Lake Perris SRA due to the loss of shallow-water habitat. DWR has been funding a 15-acre portion of a waterfowl pond rehabilitation project at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area to mitigate for the loss of waterfowl hunting opportunities. The permanent loss of hunting opportunities at the Lake Perris SRA is considered a significant and unavoidable impact of the project (see Impact 3.12-3).

Rock Climbing

Blasting would occur near Big Rock, the reservoir's primary rock climbing location. The entire area would be closed for the duration of the construction period. The haul road would traverse next to the rock face but would not affect the rock. Impacts to rock climbing are considered a significant and unavoidable temporary impact. Mitigation Measure 3.12-2b would ensure that Big Rock would not be affected by construction.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.12-2: DWR shall include in construction contractor specifications that construction would avoid the Big Rock rock-climbing area and that construction of the haul road would not alter the appearance of the rock cliff. Closed climbing structures would be identified for public awareness.

Significance after Mitigation: Construction activities would result in the temporary loss of recreation opportunities at Lake Perris SRA. DWR has implemented measures to maintain recreational uses at the facility including establishing a new beach area and extending the marina into the lowered lake. However, some camping, picnicking, rock climbing, biking and hiking facilities would be closed for the duration of the two-year construction period. In addition, construction activities could substantially disrupt the recreation experience within a natural open space environment in the open portion of the SRA. This would conflict with recreational uses at the Lake Perris SRA, which would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact of the project during the temporary construction period.

Impact 3.12-3: Drawdown of Lake Perris, the excavation of the borrow area, and the construction of the new outlet tower would adversely affect the Lake Perris SRA sport fishery and waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Lake Perris SRA has historically been host to bass fishing tournaments. These tournaments declined in number by 75 percent in 2007 and may be affected for the duration of the construction due to the reduced fishery, compromised access and general disruption caused by the construction activities. With a reduction in shallow-water habitat to support the spawning areas, impacts to

sport fishing would be significant. DWR installed 137 brush shelters for fish habitat mitigation in Lake Perris in 2006. DWR and DFG are working to establish further fish habitat improvement at Lake Perris. However, the reduction of the sport-fish spawning habitat would be a significant and unavoidable impact of the project.

The reduction in waterfowl habitat caused by construction activities would also impact waterfowl hunting. The excavation of the borrow area would result in the loss of much of the available freshwater marsh and shallow-water habitat (i.e., water less than 10 feet deep) along the northeastern edge of the reservoir where waterfowl tend to congregate to feed. The marsh and shallow water habitats are used by water fowl for foraging. If only the 125-foot buffer is left in place following excavation, the shallow-water habitat would be reduced from approximately 93 acres under pre-drawdown conditions, to approximately 69 acres, a loss of 24 acres. The remaining shallow-water habitat may not be adequate to support suitable cover for waterfowl. DWR has funded 15 acres of a CDFG waterfowl pond rehabilitation project at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area to offset the loss of waterfowl hunting opportunities at Lake Perris. Hunting opportunities would be available at these and other locations in the region for hunters no longer able to use the Lake Perris SRA. However, the project may result in the permanent reduction of hunting and fishing opportunities at Lake Perris SRA due to the reduction in marsh and shallow-water acreage. This reduction in the self-sustaining fishery and waterfowl hunting opportunities is considered a significant and unavoidable impact of the project.

Mitigation Measures

Implement **Mitigation Measures Biology 3.3-8, 3.3-9a through 3.3-9b.**

Significance after Mitigation: Even with proposed mitigation, excavation in the borrow area may result in a significant and unavoidable impact to sport fishery opportunities and waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Perris Fairgrounds

Impact 3.12-4: Construction activities would result in temporary disruption of recreational activities at the Perris Fairgrounds. The open channel emergency outlet extension alternative would permanently impact activities at the Perris Fairgrounds.

The two alternatives for construction of the emergency outlet extension, underground versus open channel, would result in two different impacts to the Perris Fairgrounds. Construction of the underground emergency outlet extension alternative would temporarily remove approximately 45 percent of an existing motocross facility within the fairgrounds. The construction would also temporarily remove approximately 750 parking spaces¹ (eight acres) used for large events at the fairgrounds. The parking area and motocross facility would be replaced following construction.

¹ Riverside County zoning code Section 18.12 requires that parking space be a minimum of 9 feet by 18 feet with a 28 foot aisle between rows.

Although the proposed project would conflict with the motocross facility, the remaining area within the fairgrounds would be open to the public for recreational uses. Once completed, the underground emergency outlet extension alternative would not conflict with the facilities or diminish their availability to the public. The project would not result in the deterioration of the recreational facilities.

Construction of the open channel emergency outlet extension alternative would permanently remove approximately 45 percent of an existing motocross facility within the fairgrounds. Given the development on the fairgrounds, reconfiguring the site to accommodate a similarly sized motocross facility would be difficult. The construction would also remove approximately 750 parking spaces¹ (eight acres) used for large events at the fairgrounds. The loss of the parking spaces would be a significant impact. Additional parking areas would need to be identified. Mitigation Measure 3.12-4 commits DWR to providing compensatory parking spaces to replace those removed by construction.

During construction, motocross enthusiasts would be able to go to nearby tracks. Perris Raceway is located approximately eight miles south and Lake Elsinore Motocross Park is located approximately 20 miles south of Perris Fairgrounds. Both locations offer alternatives to motocross recreational opportunities in the area. Perris Raceway has two separate tracks, while Lake Elsinore Motocross Park has seven tracks. The impact to recreational facilities at the fairgrounds would be temporary and less than significant for the underground alternative. Once construction of the emergency underground outlet extension is complete, the Perris Fairgrounds would return to fully normal operations. If the open channel emergency outlet channel is selected, the motocross facility would either be reconfigured on the remaining site, or would be removed from the Fairgrounds altogether. Other opportunities for motocross in the area would be available for public use. The open channel alternative would result in a permanent loss of 8 acres of the Fairgrounds, or approximately 8 percent of the total property. The Fairgrounds would remain functional, but would lose some parking capacity and possibly the entire motocross facility. This would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact of the open channel alternative necessary to provide the emergency outlet extension for Perris Reservoir.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 3.12-4: DWR shall prepare a parking plan for the fairgrounds and implement improvements to regain the lost parking spaces caused by the construction of the emergency outlet extension.

Implement **Mitigation Measures 3.8-1a and 3.8-1b**

Significance after Mitigation: Less than Significant for the underground emergency outlet extension alternative; significant and unavoidable for the open channel emergency outlet extension alternative.

Mitigation Measures Summary Table

Table 3.12-2 presents the impacts and mitigation summary for Recreation.

**TABLE 3.12-2
RECREATION IMPACTS AND MITIGATION SUMMARY**

Proposed Project Impact	Mitigation Measure	Significance after mitigation
Deterioration of Recreation Facilities: Drawdown of Lake Perris could cause or accelerate physical deterioration of the recreational facilities at the Lake Perris SRA.	3.12-1a and 3.12-1b	Less than Significant
Disruption of Activities: Construction activities would result in temporary disruption of recreational activities at Lake Perris SRA.	3.12-2	Significant and Unavoidable
Fishing and Hunting: Drawdown of Lake Perris, the excavation of the borrow area, and the construction of the new outlet tower would adversely affect the Lake Perris SRA sport fishery and waterfowl hunting opportunities.	Biology 3.3-8, 3.3-9a and 3.3-9b	Significant and Unavoidable
Perris Fairgrounds: Construction activities would result in temporary disruption of recreational activities at the Perris Fairgrounds. The open channel emergency outlet alternative would permanently impact activities at the Perris Fairgrounds.	3.12-4, Land Use 3.8-1a and 3.8-1b	Less than Significant for the underground alternative; Significant and Unavoidable for the open channel alternative